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THE SEARCH FOR MODERN CHINA: THE PRESIDENT'S CHINA TRIP

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, President Clinton, as he prepares to depart for China, carries with him an obligation, which I am sure he will fulfill, to do his best to advance U.S. core interests with Beijing and to communicate the values of the American people directly to the Chinese people.

But what is also at stake, I think, is that there is a concomitant responsibility on the part of the U.S. Senate and the U.S. Congress to adhere to a practice that has been in place for the 25 years that I have been in the U.S. Senate; that is, when a President is abroad, for the Congress to refrain, if only temporarily, from acting on matters that would affect the country which the President is visiting.

There were a number of times when President Reagan was President, when President Nixon was President, when President Ford was President, and when President Bush was President that I had sharp disagreements with their foreign policy initiatives. But never once did I, nor can I remember any of us in either the Republican or the Democratic Party, vote on legislation that would directly affect and impact upon the relationship of the United States and the country which the President was visiting.

So I ask my Republican friends, in the spirit of bipartisanship in the conduct of American foreign policy, to refrain from offering amendments to the DOD bill, if it comes up, that are designed to sanction and/or publicly criticize China at the very moment the President of the United States will be in China. I hope that we could return to that period in our relationship when both parties adhered to that practice.

There is a list of at least 12--maybe as many as 20--China sanction amendments, some of which may very well be justified, that would be attached to, or attempted to be attached to, the defense bill, which I am told is likely to come up on Tuesday of next week.

I make a personal plea to my colleagues to return to the practice that has been honored here on the floor of the U.S. Senate of not engaging in legislative action that impacts upon, or can impact upon, the relationship with the country where the President of the United States, be he a Republican or Democrat, is presently in place. I will be sending a letter to all of my colleagues asking that they do that.

But to continue, Mr. President, the President's mission is not going to be an easy one any more than the first time President Nixon went to China, or President Bush, or any other President who has engaged China.

It comes amid a sometimes rancorous debate over China policy in this country, and the debate is totally appropriate, I might add. I am not suggesting there should not be a very serious debate, and I have no doubt, because of the consequences of the actions we will take as a Nation, it will likely get rancorous at some point.

I have myself asked this Congress to move into special secret session, a rare occurrence, not so many years ago to debate the extension of most-favored-nation status to China. I did so because of my concerns about Chinese proliferation activities, proliferation of missile and/or nuclear technology. And so I am not suggesting the debate will not be heated, and I am not suggesting it should not be thorough. I am not suggesting that it will not

have political ramifications. That is all appropriate, normal and reasonable. But the President's mission is going to be made more difficult as a consequence of the debate that is underway.

There is no clear consensus in America, nor, in my view, no clear consensus in the Senate, on how to best advance American interests in the Far East. The Governments of China and the United States will not always see eye to eye, and while the people of the United States and the people of China have much in common--a love of family, a thirst for knowledge, and perhaps most importantly, a desire to see our children and grandchildren live in a world more peaceful and prosperous than our own--we also have profound differences that cannot be overlooked.

In his incisive history, entitled, 'The Search for Modern China,' Yale historian and prominent Chinese scholar Jonathan Spence writes that China is not yet truly a modern nation.'

Spence defines a modern country as 'one that is both integrated and receptive, fairly sure of its own identity, yet able to join others on equal terms in a quest for new markets, new technologies and new ideas.' He concludes that the 'search' for modern China is an ongoing act.

I think Spence is right, and the United States cannot afford to be a spectator in this drama. We need to be active on the world's stage, engaging China as it undergoes a period of extraordinary change.

What do we want? What is in our national interest? Good China policy begins with a clear articulation of U.S. interests, beamed directly to the highest levels of the Chinese Government.

There is virtually no debate in this country over our long-term objectives. Our interests are plain. We seek a more prosperous, open and democratic China, at peace with its neighbors, and respectful of international norms in the area of nonproliferation, human rights and trade.

There is considerable debate, however, about how best to achieve those objectives and whether they can all be achieved simultaneously or whether we will put

one ahead of the other during this transition period.

There are some who are convinced that the best way to persuade China's leaders to bring their domestic and foreign policies in line with U.S. expectations is to punish them for each and every misdeed--as perceived by us. This punitive approach, one which I think occasionally is appropriate, is well represented by a raft of Chinese bills passed by the House of Representatives last fall, many of which have been introduced as amendments that I have referenced earlier to the Defense Authorization Act.

Let me say that I share many of the concerns of my colleagues about the administration's handling of China policy. As I said on the Senate floor at this time last year, engagement is not a policy. Engagement is a means to an end. It is the substance of the engagement that matters.

But a 'big stick' approach to China can hardly be called engagement any more than yielding to China on every issue can be called engagement.

This confrontational approach, or the 'big stick' approach, flows from the absurd notion that China is unchanging and it will only behave responsibly when it is forced to do so.

I respectfully suggest and favor a more balanced approach. Obviously, I am being subjective in characterizing my approach as more balanced. And it is not really my approach; many share the same view I am about to articulate--a balanced approach that relies upon spelling out the rules of the road to China, inviting them to abide by them, and then monitoring their compliance with their pledges to us and the rest of the international community.

China aspires to be a great power. I welcome that aspiration because great powers live up to the great power obligation in the areas of nonproliferation, human rights and trade.

China has undergone an extraordinary change over the past 25 years, opening to the outside world and dramatically transforming its economic institutions and the tenor of its political discourse. China has evidenced increasing accommodation to international

norms.

They have done so, for the most part, because they recognize their own interests dictate greater integration with the global economic markets and security regimes. We should encourage this trend, but we should not hesitate to communicate our concerns both publicly and privately when we think they deviate.

For instance, we should not hesitate to criticize China for its human rights violations. We should publicly encourage China to sign the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and to incorporate its spirit directly into Chinese law.

I was very disappointed when the President decided not to condemn China for human rights violations before the United Nations Human Rights Commission in Geneva. If we are not going to criticize China's human rights violations in front of an international body specifically created to safeguard human rights standards, where are we willing to voice our concerns?

I am also disappointed that China continues to jam Radio Free Asia. With the support of my colleagues in the Senate and the House, I introduced legislation several years ago which created Radio Free Asia. RFA broadcasts reliable news directly to the people of China and Tibet, empowering them to hold their government accountable for its actions. But RFA is being jammed by the Chinese Government. I hope that President Clinton, when he travels to China, will tune in RFA, and if he can't find it on the radio, he should explain to his Chinese hosts that great powers do not restrict access of their people to information.

We can also do more to promote the rule of law in China, bringing the Chinese to this country to see how a truly independent judiciary functions and sending Americans to China to teach them how to create similar institutions there. The administration has requested \$5 million for the Asia Foundation to launch a rule of law initiative in China. I support this initiative.

When all else fails, the United States should not hesitate to punish China by using carefully targeted

multilateral sanctions. But this should be a last resort, not a reflex.

A wise man on the Foreign Relations Committee, the Senator from Indiana, has pointed out the dangers of an over reliance on ill-defined unilateral sanctions as an instrument of foreign policy.

We have an important role to play in the search for modern China. We can help it to its destination of modernization, or we can throw obstacles in its path. The upcoming summit presents an opportunity for the United States and China to try to bridge some of our differences, a chance to transform the issues from points of contention to examples of cooperation.

We should not expect the world from a single summit. But we can make some progress.

Perhaps no issue at the summit will be more important than that of nonproliferation. I said at the outset that we know clearly what our objectives should be for our policy, where we want a modern China to go. We don't have any misunderstanding of what we would like to see: China at peace with its neighbors, respecting international norms in the areas of nonproliferation, open trade, and human rights.

But at some point, as my dad would say, if everything is equally a high priority, then nothing is a priority. I believe that there is no more important issue at this moment in the history and our relationship with China than nonproliferation. The spread of weapons of mass destruction and the means to deliver them represents a clear and present danger to the security of both the United States and China. We need Chinese cooperation if we are to find ways to promote stability in south Asia, the Korean peninsula, and the Middle East.

China's historic track record in this area has been poor. Indeed, Pakistan probably would not possess the nuclear capacity it demonstrated late last month were it not for the Chinese assistance over the past decades. China cannot escape some responsibility for exacerbating south Asian tensions by engaging in policies that were seen as threatening to India's security.

But more recently, China appears to have undergone a sea change in its attitude. China has joined the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Biological Weapons Convention. China has also agreed to be bound by some, but not all, of the terms of the Missile Technology Control Regime prior to it joining that regime. And, while China's export laws still fall short of international norms, particularly in the area of missile technology, China has been responsive to the administration's interests where we have clearly articulated them.

Last fall, President Clinton secured a commitment from China not to extend any new cooperation to Iran's nuclear program. China has also pledged to halt all cruise missile exports to Iran in direct response to the urging of the U.S. Government. Moreover, China's initial response to nuclear tests on the subcontinent has been constructive thus far. China has avoided taking any steps which might exacerbate tensions or fuel a regional arms race.

There is more, however, that China as a great power should do. As a permanent member of the U.N. Security Council, China should join in an international diplomatic effort designed to identify the source of tensions in south Asia and foster dialog between India and Pakistan and between India and China. China should lead by example, by promoting greater transparency in arms exports, defense expenditures, and military exercises.

China, in my view, should join the Missile Technology Control Regime and agree to bring its export controls on dual-use items and missile-related technologies up to international standards. In addition, it should join the Nuclear Suppliers Group and develop comprehensive controls on all nuclear-related technologies. Taken together, these steps would not only contribute significantly to peace and stability in south Asia, they would also serve the interests of global nonproliferation.

The administration has accomplished much in the last 6 years: from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty to the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty to the Chemical Weapons Convention, et cetera. I asked, today, Assistant Secretary Roth, who testified before

the Foreign Relations Committee, why that occurred. Was it merely the persuasiveness of the U.S. President? Was it because of the sticks as well as carrots that we have offered? Or, as this emerging modern power goes through a transformation, is it because they are finally determining on their own that it is in their own interest not to proliferate?

I cannot fathom how, as a political leader sitting in Beijing, I could conclude that the ability of Pakistan to launch a nuclear

weapon on the back of a missile that I had provided to them could possibly enhance my security. I cannot understand how anyone in Beijing could conclude that an arms race between India and Pakistan, and the prospect of what we would call theater nuclear weapons being engaged, could possibly do anything other than damage my security as a Chinese leader. I cannot imagine how they could reach that conclusion. But they have, in the past, reached similar conclusions.

But I think what we are beginning to see, and it is presumptuous of me to say this about another country, but I think we are beginning to see the political maturation of a country. It is in its nascent stages, but they are coming to some of these conclusions, not merely because of what we do, not merely because of our urging, but because they begin to see it in their own naked self-interest. The only thing I have observed that causes China, in the recent past, to act against their own naked self-interest is if they are put in a position of being told they must do this or that.

So, although sanctions are appropriate in some circumstances, and stating our view of what constitutes great power behavior is always appropriate, the idea that sanctions are always appropriate when we disagree with China is very mistaken and counterproductive.

The stakes are high. Our success or failure in integrating China more fully into the community of nations, our success or failure at convincing China to live up to the international norms of behavior in the area of nonproliferation, our success or failure in helping to shape the emergence of modern China as a great power, will have profound effect, not only on

the future of east Asia and south Asia, not only on the future of Europe, but on the entire world.

Mr. President, about 25 years ago Fox Butterfield, the New York Times bureau chief in Beijing, published a book entitled 'China: Alive in the Bitter Sea.' In it, Mr. Butterfield gave a moving account of the efforts of ordinary Chinese people to live under the often brutal authoritarian regime that existed at the time.

Today there remains much injustice in China, and the struggle of ordinary people to exercise their universally acknowledged human rights is fought with peril. The outcome of that struggle will be central to the future of the 'middle kingdom.'

But the changes over the past 25 years have been so profound that those returning to China today for the first time since Deng Xiaoping opened the doors--and I went with Senators Javits and Church and others back in those early years of engagement--those who have gone back barely recognize China to be the same country.

Engagement, engagement with a purpose, can bring about changes we seek in China, including in areas of vital importance to our national security, but only if we are both patient and principled.

If we are swayed from our course by those who believe conflict with China is inevitable, or if we are lulled into a false sense of security by those who stand on this floor and confidently predict that China will automatically transform itself into a Jeffersonian democracy as it modernizes, then we will miss out on an opportunity to fulfill our role, as small

as it may be, in the search for a modern China.

Mr. President, to conclude, the stakes are high. This is no time for the U.S. Senate--in this significant summer, at this moment when, if China concludes it wishes to devalue its currency, the situation in Asia could become much, much worse,

when at the very moment when China is acting responsibly vis-a-vis Korea, we cause it to change its course of action; if at this moment we insist upon all of our agenda being met, we can do irreparable harm to our interests.

I yield the floor, Mr. President, with a final plea to my colleagues: Please, please, on this critical matter of the security interest of the United States of America, please revert to the tradition that has been time honored in this body. While a President of the United States is meeting with a head of state of another country, do not engage in activities, justified or not, that will sanction the country with which the President is at that moment negotiating. That is inappropriate behavior, in my opinion. That is not only partisanship, but it is against the naked self-interest of the United States, and I think it is reprehensible conduct.

I am confident my colleagues will ultimately do the right thing. We have plenty of time to act on, and I may even vote for, some of the proposals relating to the sanctioning of China that are contemplated in the upcoming bill. But, please look at America's interest first, look at the longstanding tradition of bipartisanship on this issue, and allow the President to conduct this major foreign policy foray on his own terms until he returns.